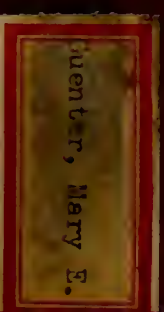
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Thesis

THE INFLUENCE OF THE FRENCH PLEIADE ON EDMUND SPENSER

By

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

My aim in this thesis is to show the extent to which the French Pleiade influenced Edmund Spenser. I must trace my interest in the subject back to the time when I was made acquainted with several poems by Ronsard and Du Bellay. Being fascinated with their beauty as well as with their Renaissance philosophy, I resolved at some time to know more about these men who dared to break away from the turgid, stuffy, Mediaeval material and reveal their own emotions in such refreshing verse. Then, in studying the English Renaissance, I was made aware that the Pleiade was one of the influences on Edmund Spenser. Remembering my French poets, I decided to combine two interests, and I set out to discover the extent of this influence. The scattered treatment of the subject together with the lack of agreement among authorities in regard to the influence of the Pleiade on Spenser incited me to bring all this diverse material into a concerted whole.

It is always interesting to discover influences on great men, for such men do not produce works of genius in a vacuum. Though genius is born, as Du Bellay said, genius must also learn from others before it can produce anything of value. It is interesting to search out the "others" and, by so doing, place the author in his proper setting and see him as a link

connecting the great works of the past with the great works of the future. All too often we take such men as Spenser or Shakespeare out of their century and, setting them on pedestals, we regard it almost heresy to say that some of their ideas were not original. The fact is that Spenser and Shakespeare grew out of the centuries that preceded them.

As I shall attempt to show, Spenser could hardly have accomplished what he did without having first learned from the Pleiade. First of all, the Pleiade writers inspired him to write poetry; secondly, they gave him means to work with in building up a new poetry. The Pleiade gave Spenser his philosophy of poetic composition and they influenced the kinds of poetry he used, his language, style, verse, and metre.

CHAPTER II

GROWTH OF THE ENGLISH RENAISSANCE FROM THE FRENCH AND ITALIAN

We must realize first that the Renaissance was no mushroom growth; it was a slowly developing process which finally led to a magnificent harvest. And just as it developed in France, it developed in England. But while France had the advantage of the earlier Italian Renaissance, England had the double advantage of being able to draw from both France and Italy. Speaking of the English Renaissance, Legouis and Cazamian say:

> . . . . all the preceding years of the sixteenth century show no more than a series of incomplete experiments, ground which was won and then lost. In consequence, English literature had its flowering season when the magnificent Italian literature had already entered on its decadence, when France had produced Rabelais and Ronsard and his Pleiade, and Montaigne's essays were appearing . . . . It was therefore in a generation enriched by all the substance of France and Italy that England realized for the first time her high literary ambitions.[1]

In France, the Renaissance had brought a magnificent renewal of art and literature.

> La France, guidee par ses rois et notamment par Francois I, avait decouvert avec ravissement les splendeurs de l'art italien. A travers l'Italie, elle avait eu la revelation de l'antiquite: elle ava t traduit et naturalise sur son sol Platon, Homere, Virgile.[2]

But the fact remains that while the French admired Greek and

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[1] Emile Legouis and Louis Cazamian, A History of English Literature (New York: Macmillan Co., 1926), p. 127.

[2] Henri Peyre and Eliot Grant, Seventeenth Century French Prose and Poetry (Boston: Heath and Col, 1937), p. 3.

Latin literature and praised it to the heavens, they borrowed most from the Italians. While they learned many lessons in composition from the study of the classics, they turned to their more recent neighbors. A literary group founded by the Italian Tolemai is even said to have influenced the Pleiade members to unite.

Since the French were so dependent on the Italians, any French influence on English literature must ultimately be traced to Italy. It has been the great problem of the authorities in making comparative studies to know whether borrowings were taken indirectly from the French version of the Italian work, or directly from the work itself. It is generally agreed, however, that while the English studied Greek, Latin, and Italian literature in the original, French literature circulated much more freely in England than any other literature. Studies show that the English depended more on their neighbors.

The question arises, "Why should the English have borrowed so much, when they had enough precedent at home?" But the fact remains that most Elizabethans were blind to the merits of the "courtly makers" Wyatt and Surrey, although some of their ideas, such as the English sonnet form were adopted. In the dark period after their deaths, England sank from the high peak of literary attainment which Wyatt and Surrey had set for it. When the Englishmen awoke again, they turned to the

French poet Clement Marot, who preceded the Pleiade and was at the height of his fame when the younger poets arose to contradict his poetic tenets. The name Shephard's Calendar comes from Marot's Le Kalendrier des Bergiers, and two books copy his eclogues. But it was to the Pleiade members that the Elizabethans turned for most of their tutelage. The greater writers borrowed ideas which they used in creating original works, while the lesser writers plundered wholesale the French writings. Even Shakespeare borrowed from the French, and we do not put a smirch on his fame nor do we reverence him less in saying that he did borrow.

There were many reasons why the French writers should have been accepted so enthusiastically. Ronsard was a favorite of Queen Elizabeth and a friend not only of the Earl of Leicester, Sidney's uncle, but of Sidney, who had met Ronsard during a stay in Paris.

Ronsard praised the Queen highly. Says Mr. Lee, as he gives us the words of Ronsard:

> He looks for the day when swans on the river Thames will proclaim that the Muses have deserted Parnassus to greet in poetry the sovereigns of England, but the day of the swans on the Thames had not yet dawned. In complacent mood Rondard regrets that God has denied England the joy of the vineyard, with which his own country was bountifully endowed, but bids her take comfort: Bacchus had not refused Britons all his gifts; the merry god had joined Ceres in creating beer. The French poet . . . . shows his early interest in Leicester by reporting the rumor of his coming marriage with Queen Elizabeth. He mentions among extraordinary prophecies-

Et qu'un Anglois si fortune sera
Que sa maitresse un jour espousera.[3]

Lee also says that Ronsard dedicated to the queen a new volume of Elegies, Mascarades et Bergeries to commemorate the treaty of Troyes between England and France. In the epistle, he commends his name and fame to the keeping of the queen.

Not only was Ronsard a favorite of the Queen and her courtiers, but from English literature of writers contemporary with Ronsard and Du Bellay we may glean the evidence that these two leaders as well as their followers were generally well known in England. Barring Spenser for the moment, Thomas Watson wrote of the new achievments of Ronsard. In Tarlton's News out of Purgatory, 1590, a company of poets is described as sitting around listening to Ronsard recite a description of his mistress, Cassandra. This was meant to be sarcasm, but the writer ridicules the English translations of Ronsard, not the poet himself. Another writer said Ronsard and Du Bellay were overly praised. Drayton deplored the all too common habit of stealing from Desportes, Ronsard's successor. Thomas Lodge penned a notable praise of Desportes. "Few men are able to second the sweet conceits of Philip Desportes, whose poetical writings (are) for the most part Englished, and ordinarily in everybody's hands."[4]

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[3]Sidney Lee, The French Renaissance inNEngland (New York: Chas. Scribner's Sons, 1910), pp. 193f.

[4]Ibid., p. 211.

Although the English admired French writings and often stole from them, as Drayton said, for the most part English writers did not acknowledge their borrowings. A few, such as Thomas Jenye, who translated Ronsard's Discours des Miseres de ce temps a la Royne mere du Roy in 1562, and Thomas Watson, stated openly that their work was translation.

We must not conclude that the English were mere "copy-cats", for in spite of the profuse borrowing of ideas and forms, the English poetry preserved its own distinctive character. In poetry, it is not the idea which matters but the original way in which the poet presents the idea, and the greater English writers treated borrowed ideas in their own original way. Too, the English were more concerned with the content of their poetry than with its form. With the French, it was form that mattered. While French poetry appealed to the ear, English poetry appealed to the heart. Since English poetry went so much deeper in its emotional appeal, it surpassed French poetry by far.

CHAPTER III

THE PLEIADE

It was while Ronsard was at the College of Coqueret in Paris that he formed his great project for the reform of French poetry. On a journey between Poitiers and Paris, he met Du Bellay, exchanged views with him, and Du Bellay decided to join the college, too.

Soon the Pleiade (L549-1585) was organized. It was composed of the five young men who conceived it: Ronsard, Du Bellay, Remy Belleau, Jean de Baif, and Etienne Jodelle. To the five there were added Pontus de Tyard and the Greek professor, Jean Dorat. At first they called themselves _le docte brigade_, but soon they adopted the name of Pleiade, the Seven Stars, after a similar organization of Greek poets at the court of Ptolemy Philadelphus at Alexandria. The French Pleiade was to "become the best known constellation in literary history."[1] It was to put into practice the radical reforms conceived by Ronsard. Many later French writers were to follow in the trail which the Pleiade poets had broken. Among these was Desportes, whom we shall have occasion to mention in connection with Spenser's sonnets. Desportes carried on the work of his superior, Ronsard, in French poetry.

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[1] _Ibid._, p. 188.

Now that our poets are organized in the Pleiade, let us get some idea of the philosophy which governed these men's lives and their poetic composition. In their enthusuasm, these young Renaissance poets broke from the narrow bonds of mediaeval authority and turned to the classic writings, with their broader philosophy of life. In their own effort to create a more philosophic poetry which would treat broadly of human life, they included in their work some of this classic philosophy. Their aim in this adoption was to bring the best of classical thought to modern readers. They made no claim about having originated it themselves. Thus we cannot be sure that the philosophy which the Pleiade poets adopted was really their own conviction.

Searching through the whole mass of classical material with an eye toward determining what the French merely borrowed and what they believed, we are tempted to say that they had no deep-seated convictions because they were not philosophers. Du Bellay had more profound thoughts than Ronsard, since the former struck out for himself rather than following so closely the conventional topics. But Ronsard's philosophy was more typical of the whole group. He attempted philosophical themes concerning religion, nature, and love, but he seems always to have turned in the end to less intricate patriotic and laudatory material. In his religious work we find a curious mixture of pagan and Christian sentiment. Judging by the titles of some

of his hymns we should be tempted to call him a religious poet, and indeed he did turn to religious topics in his later hymns.

Ronsard's Hymne de la Mort is thoroughly Christian. The The Epicurean fear of death so characteristic of the Renaissance is here set aside. Yet even in the religious poems, he included mythical and legendary material relating to classical deities. His idea was that God could be found behind the worship of the pagans, and thus he attempted to reconcile this conflict. But we suspect that he, as well as the rest of the Pleiade, had no deep religious beliefs since he was for the most part too materialistic. Ronsard turned from involved, unsatisfying philosophic thought to hymns of praise; his eye was on success, and he was a born courtier skilled too long in the art of flattery.

In Ronsard's love poems we find this same materialistic outlook. The themes are purely conventional. The idea of carpe diem is a favorite one, found, for example, in Ronsard's most famous ode, "Mignonne, allons voir si la rose." It is the French counterpart of "Gather ye rosebuds"; the accent is on the present life. The rest of the Pleiade had a similar outlook since it was a Renaissance trait.

While the classic Platonic philosophy is to be found both in the Pleiade writings and in those of Marot, it is rather unsafe to say that it was their own conviction. The knowledge

that Ronsard took over some Platonic terms and used them, utterly divorced from their original meaning, to describe the physical beauties of his mistress, leads us to think the French were a bit too worldly for Plato and took over his ideas rather for the beauty of phrase than for the content. The French were too involved in this live to be very spiritual, and we find none of the deep philosophical thought which characterized Spenser's works.

The Pleiade's poetic philosophy was more profound and more sincere than its philosophy of life. They set out to make French poetry rival any other poetry, classical or otherwise. To do this they had to enrich their language in style and verse. For their models they turned to the classicists and the Italians, ignoring for the most part the old French poets.

The French kept steadily to their purpose and achieved their ends, for they had a faith in French poetry and they were sure of the immortality of the poet. Other works of art might crumble, might be forgotten along with those who created them, but it was not so with poetry:

> Ne pilier, ne terme dorique
> D'histoires vieilles decore
> Ne marbre tire d'Afrique
> En colonnes elabore.
> Ne te feront si bien revivre
> Apres avoir passe la port
> Comme les plumes et le livre
> Te feront vivre apres ta mort.

said Ronsard. Confident of himself, he boasted:

> Je suis, dis je, Ronsard, et cela te suffice,
> Ce Ronsard, que la France honore, chante et prise,
> Des Muses le mignon: et de qui les escrits
> N'ont crainte de se voir par les ages surpris.

This poetic vaunt of immortality was taken from the classics but they far outdid their classic masters. It was the individualism of the Renaissance cropping out. Ronsard meant to be as sure of glory in using his own language as highly as the old poets he followed.

But while Ronsard looked for glory even in his lifetime, Du Bellay was not so confident. He felt an inferiority, and in one of the sonnets of his Antiquites de Rome he wished that he had the harp of Amphion to rebuild the city, or a pen like Virgil's to raise the edifice. He then asked his verses if they could aspire to be read by later times. If anything could live Rome would have lived. But he would keep on writing poetry, humble as he was. Certainly he would have no fame in his own lifetime, but he would hope for glory in future ages. He had written:

> . . . . espere le fruict de ton labeur de l'encorruptible et non envieuse posterite. C'est la gloire, seule eschelle par les degres de laquelle les mortels d'un pied leger montent au ciel et se font compagnons des dieux.

From his early doubts and waverings, Du Bellay turned to a more confident attitude as he grew older. We will see much of Du Bellay's sentiment passing into Spenser.

The poet, then, was one person over whom Time had no

sway. In his great faith in immortality, he even boasted that he was strong enough to give others eternal fame. Certainly this was incontrovertible, for as long as his poetry lasted, the people who were celebrated in that poetry would remain known. The idea was of ancient classic origin and the Pleiade members make it very common. Ronsard wrote:

> Par cet hymne solennel
> Respandra dessus ta race
> Je ne scay quoi de sa grace
> Qui te doit faire eternel.(Odes,I,vii)

and

> Longtemps apres la mort, je vous feray revivre;
> Vous vivrez et croistrez comme Laure en grandeur,
> Au moins tant que vivront les plumes et le livre.
> (Sonnets pour Helene,II)

The faith in the immortality of poetry, of the poet, and of all those to whom that poetry was addressed was founded on a stronger basis than that of historical fact. For these poets conceived of poetry as a divine gift, given by God to a chosen few. Ronsard wrote:

> Par art le navigateur
> Dans la mer manie, et vire
> La bride de son navire:
> Par art les Rois sont querrirs,
> Par art se font les ouvriers:
> Mais si vaine experience
> Vous n'aurez de tel erreur,
> Sans plus ma sainte fureur
> Polira vostre science . . . .
> les verse viennent de Dieu,
> Non de l'humaine puissance.[2]

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[2]William L. Renwick, Edmund Spenser (London: Edward Arnold and Co., 1925), p. 186.

and Du Bellay wrote:

> Une fureur d'esprit au ciel me conduisoit
> D'une aile qui la mort et les siecles evite,
> Et le docte troppeau qui sur Parnasse habite
> De son feu plus divin mon ardeur attisoit.[3]

'Le docte troupeau', the Muses, here represent the power of God. Since poetry was a divine gift it was an exalted calling, not for everyone. Ronsard said that all men should not concern themselves with poetry, that prose was the language of men, but poetry was the language of the gods, and that men had to be consecrated from birth in order to be true poets.

True poets were rapidly disappearing, for the public no longer valued good poetry. Even the rich and powerful whom the poets had need of as patrons were indifferent to poetry. Du Bellay lamented this in his Deffense:

> Kings and princes should remember, it seems to me, that great emperor, who preferred that the ancient might of the laws should be broken than that the works of Virgil, condemned to the flames by the testament of their author, should be burned. What shall I say of that other great monarch who preferred the rebirth of Homer to a great victory? Once when near the tomb of Achilles, he cried out: 'Oh, happy youth to have found such a trumpeter of your praises.' In truth, without the divine muse of Homer the same tomb that covered the body of Achilles would also have overwhelmed his renown . . . .[4]

But the great men paid no heed to such things, for dissapations had made men lose the desire for immortality. They not only ignored poets, but they made fun of them. Those with popularity

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[3]Ibid., p. 186.

[4]Harrie S. V. Jones, Handbook of Spenser (New York: F. S. Crofts and Col, 1930), p. 88.

were the mock poets who had degraded poetry and who had no business writing poetry. Du Bellay prayed to Apollo for a poet whose well-sounding lute would silence the raucous bagpipes much as a stone thrown into a swamp silenced the voices of the frogs.[5]

This state of affairs had to be remedied. It was the concern of the few divinely inspired poets to take the responsibility which God had given them. To be born poets was not enough; they had to study diligently in order to become poets of worth. When once they had fitted themselves, they could work toward reestablishing a poetry of worth and so earn the promised immortality.

It was for the Pleiade poets to reestablish French poetry and Du Bellay was the first one to give to the world and account of the Pleiade's program. In 1549 came his Deffense et Illustration de la langue francaise. Later, there were other critical works by various authors, notably Ronsard's Abrege de l'art Poetique in 1565 and the Prefaces to the Franciade, in which he explained the methods he had used in his epic.

We may take Du Bellay's work as representative of the views of the whole group. It had been occasioned by Thomas Sibilet's Art Poetique, in which Sibilet had stated precepts based on the teachings of Marot. This was just what the Pleiade members were struggling against, for they thought very little

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[5] Ibid., p. 92.

of the poetic work of their predecessors. It was this work, then, which Du Bellay answered in the Deffense.

Du Bellay divided his works into two books. In the first his purpose was to defend the French language as being potentially as good for the expression of elevated thought as the classical Latin or Greek. But cultivation was necessary. The translations of the classics which had been made were not enough. French writers must do original work in imitation of Greek or Roman literature, and they must do it in their mother tongue. In this way the French language would be built up.

In his second book, the Illustration, Du Bellay's general aim was to show how the French language could be improved. He began by dismissing all French literature before the sixteenth century with the exception of the Roman de la Rose. He then went into a scathing criticism of modern writers as being altogether unworthy of the name of poets, Poets are born, he said, but they must study and work hard in order to produce anything of value. He then went on to recommend the kinds of poetry to be cultivated. The rest of the book was devoted to problems of vocabulary enrichment and versification. He ended, as he had begun, with the patriotic plea to Frenchmen not to neglect their won tongue, for France was superior to any other modern nation.

The kinds of poetry advocated by the Pleiade were those

used by the classic poets. The forms of antiquity were recommended as being far superior to the insignificant forms used by the predecessors of the Pleiade. Most of the forms which the Pleiade group claimed to have resurrected from antiquity had been used by earlier French writers.

The sonnet was to become the Pleiade's most representative form, yet it was not of classical origin but Italian. Du Bellay wrote in his Deffense: "Sonne-moi ces beaux sonnets . . . . non moins docte que plaisante invention italienne, pour lesquels tu as Petrarque et quelques modernes Italiens." Ronsard said that he had introduced the sonnet into France, but it had been used by Marot. Marot had made a translation of Petrarch in a series of sonnets called the Visions of Petrarch and he had produced the Queen Mother sonnets. Both of these are important in connection with Spenser's work. But it was the Pleiade group who really made the sonnet popular in France: they used the form most frequently. Important to us are Du Bellay's Songes and his Antiquites de Rome, also his sonnet sequence called Olive. Desportes, whom we have mentioned as a follower of Ronsard, also wrote many sonnets and we mention him because of his influence on English writers and on Spenser.

The eclogue was another kind of poetry which Du Bellay recommended and in the Deffense he named both Italian and classical poets to be used as models in writing eclogues. It is

interesting to note that he also praised the Eclogue of Marot, presumably his foe. Marot had written two eclogues, one on the death of Madame Loyse and another called Pan et Robin.

Still another genre suggested by Du Bellay was the elegy. Here, too, Marot had preceded the Pleiade writers and had included the notable elegy, the Lament to Dido, in one of his eclogues. Marot had copied the Greeks Bion and Moscus as the earliest writers of elegies and then Theocritus. The poem follows the traditional form, the first part being a lament over the death of the lady and the loss the poet has suffered. The second part is a rejoicing over the fact that she has gone to a better world.

A fourth type of poetry recommended by Du Bellay was the satire. In classical times Horace had praised it as a restrained type of wit, and the Pleiade followed him in pleading its use instead of the undisciplined farce.

The epigram is a fifth type which Du Bellay mentioned. Marot had called his Visions of Petrarch 'epigrammes', but they were not true ones. He wrote a real epigram in No. 64 of his volume De Diane, where he treated the Cupid and Bee fable of Anacreon. This theme was treated at least six times by the French, and the one by Ronsard is perhaps the best.

The ode was a sixth form mentioned in the Deffense. The ode was a novelty in France, and Ronsard claimed that he was the first to adopt the Pindaric ode to French, but they were to

be found in the work of Jean le Maire, an earlier poet. Ronsard misconceived the spirit and structure of Pindar's work and with his friends soon dropped the formal ode just as Horace had done. He reduced it to a series of brief stanzas, varying in number but uniform in construction. These non-Pindaric odes show a love of nature, are melancholy, and complain of the transitoriness of life. Ronsard found that this simpler form of ode was better suited to love poems. His best-known ode is the famous 'Mignonne, allons voir si la rose.'

For the informal ode, Ronsard afterwards substituted the humn, which he regarded as very near the ode. Ronsard's second book of Hymnes made him a rising star; they were the most popular of all his works. His hymns differ widely, although most of them are in alexandrines. The early ones were quite pagan in character, but he tried later to make his hymns Christian.

We cannot overlook the little lyric poems dealing with the floral pageantry of Spring and Summer. Although Du Bellay did not mention them, probably because they were unimportant, they were very popular with the Pleiade writers, especially Ronsard.

The heroic or epic was the most important type of poetry advised by Du Bellay. Opening his discussion of the major genre of poetry, Du Bellay appealed to the New Poet thus: "Donques, o toy qui doue d'une excellente felicite de nature, ... "

and went on to say that the epic was worthy of the greatest efforts of divinely inspired poets who had fitted themselves for the task. As a model Du Bellay recommended the Italian poet Ariosto, who had written an epic, Orlando Furioso. Ariosto's work differed from the classical epics of Homer and Virgil in its loose construction and its inclusion of romantic material. Du Bellay was in favor of the latter and wrote:

> Comme luy (Ariosto) donq', qui a bien voulu emprunter de nostre Langue les Noms et l'Histoire de son Poeme, choysi moi quelqu'Un de ces beaux vieulx Romans Francoys, comme un Lancelot ou Tristan, ou autres et en foy renaître au monde un admirable Iliade et la laborieuse Aneide . . .

Du Bellay advised poets to use their eloquent romances for the purpose of teaching--'a doctement ecrire.' He also counceled the use of old chronicles in condensed form, which were to be preserved in the epic.

In his Preface to the Franciade, Ronsard echoed and expanded the views of Du Bellay. He undertook to surpass Ariosto; he took from Ariosto's epic the recounting of certain mythical Trojan-descended ancestors of the ruling house and he also used national chronicles. Other characteristics of his epic were: the use of romantic material of single combat with giants, the fondness for personified abstractions and virtues and vices, the use of allegorical pageant, the retarding of the narrative by long descriptions, the setting of one year as the time limit of an epic.

Having seen the kinds of poetry adopted by the Pleiade,

we may proceed to the reforms which the French poets made in language and style.

The Pléiade, with its exalted conception of poetry, felt it necessary to create a new, richer, and more noble language to suit this exalted poetry. Poetry was to have a language apart, and the words used for prose were not ample enough or even suitable. This necessitated vocabulary enrichment, and a great controversy raged over the borrowing of foreign words, both contemporary and classical. A great many Italian words were introduced into French during the sixteenth century, and many were used by the Pleiade. While the French approved of some use of Italian, they feared Italianization and defended their own language against the invasion of foreign tongues. The Pleiade undertook, too, to rid French of a host of learned barbarisms which the 'rhetoriqueurs' had introduced. The poets considered the French of their day to be too full of Greek and Latin erudite words, especially mythological.

The conclusion of the Pleiade was that the poet might borrow words and phrases to suit his own needs, as long as he used discretion. The Pleiade group believed in giving the poet absolute liberty in experiment in contrast to the 'rhetoriquer' school of poets who held extremely pedantic views. The poet's trained ear is far more apt to be right and thus the opinion of ordinary people is to be discounted.

The Pleiade chose the golden mean between the language of common people and the language of pedantry. Poetic diction was to be neither all home-bred nor all learned, but both were to be used according to the poet's discretion.

Home-bred words were to include archaisms and dialectical terms and phrases. We find that there was a difference of opinion among the French in regard to the use of archaic words. Du Bellay frowned on their immoderate use and he preferred to borrow from the classics rather than from old French. But from his works we may see that Du Bellay used archaic terms, nevertheless. Ronsard, on the other hand, praised the use of archaic terms, and used many. Only occasionally did Ronsard use it for decorum; for the most part he wanted to enrich the language with archaic language. The use of provincial dialect offered further controversy. While Ronsard warmly recommended dialectic terms, but used them only slightly, Du Bellay, in his Deffense, ignored the subject entirely. It was out of place in the courtly writing of the Pleiade.

Learned accretions were to include: naturalized importations from foreign tongues, ancient and modern; technical terms from the arts and sciences; and new coinages. The last type consisted of the construction of new words from words already existing. The Pleiade called this 'provignement' (engrafting) and frequently used it. Compound epithets were in the same category of new makings. Ronsard was proudest of this in-

vention and he used hundreds of these words. He created adjectives and epithets from two separate words which were often different parts of speech. Two nouns could be joined, two adjectives, a verb and a noun, or a noun and an adjective. The use of compound epithets became the Pleiade's distinguishing characteristic.

In accordance with the poet's freedom in the use of language, the French poets did not hesitate to alter words for convenience of rhyme and metre. Ronsard had claimed the privilege of poetic license and Du Bellay followed the practice although he was less bold in stating it.

Through these reforms the Pleiade group hoped to elevate poetic language without making it unintelligible, but they were in no sense writing for the common people. Poetry was in their view limited to the leisured and the learned.

The next step in the enrichment of language was through syntax. The innovations of the Pleiade were: the use of the infinitive as a substantive; the use of the adjective as a noun or an adverb; and inversion. In a word, the Pleiade writers made one part of speech take the place of another and they put one clause of a sentence where another ordinarily belonged. The French used these so often that their diction just missed geing 'precious'. Their desire to be 'above the mob' led them to such artificialities.

After enriching the vocabulary so that the resulting language was adequate for any type of writing, the Pleiade used this vocabulary in their new style. In the day of Marot, the most notable fault the French poets had was lack of style, and here the Italian refugees supplied the want. Although most of them were profit seekers and what was worse, third rate poets, they had style. Through contact with them, the French obtained a style sense which was classic in origin, for the Italians had been fed with Greek.

The Pleiade members, imbued with this sense of style, took over these Italian ideas and created what they called the 'style noble', chiefly by the use of mythology and paraphrase. In renouncing their country's past they wanted to abandon the folk tales, the legends of fairies and marvelous Christians, and instead they would substitute mythology. Ronsard gave a humorous self-criticism at the end of his laborious epic.

> Les Francois qui mes vers liront,
> S'ils ne sont et Grecs et Romans
> En lieu de ce livre ils n'auront
> Qu'un pesant faix entre les mains.[6]

For the new poetry became overweighted with classical allusion. It was the same with paraphrase. Du Bellay said, in recommending it:

La grace d'elle est quand on designe le nom de quelque

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[6]Jefferson B. Fletcher, "Areopagus and Pleiade." Journal of Germanic Philology, II (1898-9), p. 443.

> chose par ce qui luy est propre, comme le Pere foudroyant, pour Iupeter, le Dieu deux fois ne, pour Bacchus, le vierge chasseresse, pour Dyane. Cete figure a beaucoup d'autres especes, que tu trouveras chez les Rhetoriciens, sa fort bonne grace principalement aux descriptions, comme Depuis ceux qui voyent premiers rougir l'Aurore, iusques la ou Thetis recit . . . . le fils d'Hyperion; pour, depuis l'Orient iusques a l'Occident.

Du Bellay went to great lengths to explain what was later to be too well known.

"The yeoman's share of the work was done by Ronsard ", says Tilley.[7] He had a feeling for style and created it, in spite of the fact that he had none to guide him in France. He was best in his reflective and emotional poetry, especially his elegies. He loved nature and he was at his best when he used nature as a background for his work. He not only described nature but he also used it imaginatively and his imagination never deserted him when he was expressing his own feelings.

While Du Bellay fell below Ronsard in the highest qualities of a poet--poetic vision and poetic execution--he had a more delicate sensibility. His best work is more simple and more light than Ronsard's.

The Regrets is Du Bellay's strongest and most original work. From Ariosto he had learned to write of personal feelings, and Berni had taught him to write little satires of life. From both he had learned the natural and easy style and the direct language which differed so much from the Pleiade tradition.

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[7] Arthur A. Tilley, The Literature of the French Renaissance, I (Cambridge: University Press), p. 336.

His ideas were his own and his sonnets became records of his personal feelings in simple language rather than polished, mechanical, Petrarchian conceits. Du Bellay had the qualities which most of the Pleiade poetry lacked--creative energy and seriousness of purpose. French poetry tended to be too conceited, artificial, and insincere, which was only natural in a pompous court in contact with a decadent Italy.

Just as the Pleiade members improved the language and style of French poetry, they improved versification. In the French metricalssystem each line contained a ficed number of syllables and the lines were bound together by rhyme. In order to improve the versification, the Pleiade considered two things to be necessary: the invention of new rhythms, and the restoration of "grand vers". Ronsard was such a leader in metrical reform; he added over one hundred metres to French poetry, and he restored the Alexandrine or hexameter which is considered his most notable reform. Ronsard also advised going back to old authors for models.

The French created a musical and smooth-flowing verse by variation of metre while still keeping syllabic regularity and rhyme, which bound together the lines. The judgment of smooth poetry depended on the poet's trained ear, Ronsard and Du Bellay insisted. The ear, not the eye, was important, and thus spelling was disregarded. The practice led to what we would call poetic license.

Ronsard related verse to music, and his musical ear and harmony sense led him to develop to the full the possibilities in sound and word combination. He recommended the 'rime riche', the alternation of masculine and feminine verses, the unequal length of line, and line linking, all of which would make a more musical and varied verse. But instead of making rules, Ronsard only counselled, for it was a matter of inspiration and trained ear rather than mechanics. The alternation of rhymes was required for the most part, since it was necessary to musical verse; the hiatus was to be avoided if it did not sound well, and it was well to use the caesura in the long alexandrine. Ronsard at first proscribed linking, but later saw that it was valuable and allowed it. In other words, while he knew classical rules, he was not enslaved by them and left it a matter of the poet's taste.

We have now seen something of the Pleiade's organization, its philosophy and its program for the reform of French poetry. We shall see that Edmund Spenser followed the French literary program very closely in reforming English poetry. His training and early literary work had given him the chance to know and appreciate the French productions and while he did not neglect entirely the progress that earlier English poets had made, the well organized French program was much more valuable to him in creating a new English poetry.

CHAPTER IV

THE WORK OF SPENSER

No doubt Spenser was first acquainted with French literature through Mulcaster, one of Spenser's teachers at the Merchant Taylors' School. Mulcaster had a great influence on the young man. He was versatile and had a winning personality. He was interested in French and Italian as well as English and urged his students to make translations. It was without doubt he who obtained for Spenser the task of translating the Visions of Petrarch and the Ruins of Rome for Van der Noot's Theatre of Worldlings. This work occurred during Spenser's undergraduateship at Cambridge.

Spenser probably continued his French readings at the universtiy, where French literature was taught. Harvey, in his correspondence with Spenser, speaks of such studies.

Through Mulcaster and his universtiy reading, Spenser must habe obtained a wide interest in foreign literature. He wrote to Harvey that he was influenced by Ariosto and Tasso and he once told Harvey that he started to imitate Ariosto. This idea seems to have been taken from Du Bellay, who advised this same thing in his Deffense. Spenser's later interest in Tasso was probably due to the Pleiade group, for they admired the Italian author.

Harvey's literary opinions were no doubt influenced by Leicester, his employer and a great admirer of the French poets.

In their correspondence, Spenser and Harvey exchanged opinions concerning English poetry and specimens of verse written to prove these theories. It is through this correspondence, too, that we hear of the Areopagus, the literary club which we associate with the writing of English verse in Latin quantitative style, and in these letters we see examples of attempts to write poetry in Latin metre.

But what is more significant, the Harvey-Spenser letters lead authorities to think that the Areopagus probably had aims similar to those of the Pleiade. In the correspondence, both Spenser and Harvey praise Sidney and Dyer, who were engaged in writing English verse in Latin metre. Harvey writes: "I cannot choose but thanke and honour the Good Aungell.. . . . that put so good a notion in to the head of these two excellent Gentlemen, M.Sidney and M.Dyer, ... as to helpe forward our new famous enterprise for the Exchanging of Barbarous and Balductum Rymes with Artificial verses."

Macintire points out that the possessive "our" suggests a union of Harvey and Spenser similar to that of Sidney and Dyer, and the quotation suggests the merging of the two groups.[1] At any rate, by 1579 The English Poet, Spenser's lost critical critical work on English poetry, had been prepared.[2] If the Sidney-Dyer, Spenser-Harvey combination did not merge, it is

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[1]Elizabeth J. Macintire, "French Influence on English Classicism." Publication Modern Language Assoc., III(Apr., 1908), pp. 500f.

[2]Jefferson B. Fletcher, op. cit., p. 429.

strange that Sidney should have published so soon afterwards his Defense of Poesie, also a critical work, which contains the same views as those in Spenser's English Poet, as far as we can gather from E.K.'s comments in the glosses to the Shepherd's Calendar concerning the lost work. And Grosart even suggested that Sidney's work copied Spenser's.[3]

Sidney could not have failed to be influenced by Elizabeth's jealousy of the achievments of Ronsard in France and Tasso in Italy, and his Defense shows that he had studied diligently Du Bellay's ideas, for Sidney's aims are very similar to those in the Deffense et Illustration. Sidney's lofty conception of the poet's mission echoes Du Bellay's, and both agree on the use of the vernacular and its need for enrichment. We may assume that the English Poet said practically the same thing. Since these works are English counterparts of the French school's manifesto and followed in such close succession, it is more than likely that Spenser and Harvey, Sidney and Dyer, who had coincidental views, merged into the Areopagus with aims for English poetry similar to the Pleiade's aims for French poetry.

It has been suggested that the Areopagus writers had enough precedent at home and borrowed from Ascham rather than from the Pleiade. Mr. Fletcher replies:

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[3] Ibid., p. 429.

> Ascham indeed, recommended some things . . . . Ascham's precept was, however, 'to write as common people do.' Certainly . . . . the very last thing in their intention was to write as common people do. As for Ascham's proscription of rhyme, ... Areopagus . . . . did not proscribe, but prescribe, rhyme. If it be objected that the Pleiade is not explicitly recognized by the Areopagus as its model, I dan only answer that neither Spenser nor Sidney, nor Elizabethans in general, bothered much about such formal recognitions. Professor Herford has well said that it might almost seem as if 'Spenser borrowed from Chaucer nothing but his sly way of acknowledging indebtedness chiefly where it was not due.'"[4]

In regard to quantitative writing, however, Ascham had advised it in his Schoolmaster and it would be difficult to say whether the English followed him or the Pleiade, whose members also attempted such writing.

Whether the aims of the Areopagus were as comprehensive as those of the Pleiade is still uncertain, but it is pleasing to think of Spenser as playing the same role of spokesman for the English version of the Pleiade as Du Bellay played for the original. For Spenser did speak for English poetry just as Du Bellay did for French, and he voiced a set of literary aims very similar to those of Du Bellay, which is all the more reason for thinking the Areopagus might have been comparable in scope to the Pleiade.

While the English Poet is lost, we can see clearly enough Spenser's aims in the Shepherd's Calendar, which we may call his first original work. He was trying to do for English what

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[4] Ibid., pp.452-3.

Du Bellay had done for the French; he wanted to make English poetry as good as Latin or Greek and to do that he had to reform the language. He took the same means that Du Bellay had taken. He went back to the classics for his poetic forms; he did much for style in suiting the form to the subject; he elevated the vernacular and he improved versification.

While in general Spenser's aims and those of Du Bellay coincided, the two authors differ in one instance. Although Du Bellay despised his country's past, Spenser deliberately went back to the past for his inspiration. As we know, Chaucer was the only poet whom he acknowledged in his Shepherd's Calendar. We shall find Spenser basing his new vocabulary largely on archaisms which he resurrected from the past, while the Pleiade members, though they believed in using such words for purposes of decorum, made no such extensive use of them.

Having seen Spenser's early preparation for his great work, we must form some idea of the philosophy of this man. It is revealed for the most part in his greatest work, The Faerie Queene. In writing this epic, Spenser had as one of his purposes 'to fashion a gentleman or noble person in virtuous and gentle discipline.' He went back to the classics and brought together the best of their doctrines rather than trying to formulate a system of morality of his own. As regards philosophy, therefore, Spenser did not so much copy the Pleiade writers as follow their advice. Both Spenser and the Pleiade

went back to the same sources.

We cannot say that Spenser followed any one school of philosophy just because he included such ideas in his work. But if we delve far enough, we can obtain some idea of the real Spenser lying behind the borrowed philosophy.

The most important fact is that through his writing, Spenser reveals himself as a Christian with Puritan tendencies. In this he is the conservative, going back to his church teaching instead of ahead to the classicist ideas. What he is attempting is the reconciliation of the classic philosophies with that of Christianity. The result is a curious, confusing mixture.

Platonism was one of the commonest philosophies to be linked with Christianity. It was used so widely that it became a fashion. It harmonized well with Christianity in being spiritual, and it fit in very well with Petrarchism. In brief, Platonism emphasizes the spiritual as the real thing. The material is transitory, but the spiritual is eternal and the ultimate reality.

We find this mixture of Platonism and Christianity in Spenser's Hymns. His sources may have been the neo-Platonists, those who had revived Plato's philosophy. But Spenser borrowed the hymn form from Ronsard and he may have borrowed the philosophy too, since we find a mixture of pagan and Christian sentiment here as we have seen. Upon the criticism that his first

two hymns, those in honor of Love and Beauty, were too worldly and sensuous, he wrote the Hymns of Heavenly Love and Heavenly Beauty with the emphasis on the Christian and moral side. But the latter hymns are not so different. The Hymn in Honour of Heavenly Beauty is still Platonic. Spenser printed all four together. While he probably reformed, he still wanted the public to have his first two poems, for which we do not blame him since they are beautiful poetry.

We see here a mixture of Spenser's mediaeval conservative side in the Christian elements and his Renaissance side in the Platonic elements. We find Platonism also in some of the Amoretti. But Renwick maintains that Platonism was not a creed of Spenser's and that the latter two Hymns show that Platonism ceased to attract Spenser as he became more involved in church problems.

However, Spenser did not forget Plato entirely. But he followed other authorities too, especially Lucretius. For Platonism divorced entirely the spiritual from the real, and what Spenser did in the Faerie Queene was to combine the Platonic doctrine of spiritual love with Lucretius' equally strong idea of earthly love, which combination becomes the teaching of the Church. The spiritual love is not ascetic or divorced from the physical, but a part of it. This is the true Puritanism in Spenser, where ethics are a part of every day existence.

In dealing with this combination of material and spiritual it was inevitable that Spenser should have come upon the problem of the transitoriness of life, the brevity of physical beauty. This Spenser came to accept, not as a tragedy, as it was thought of by Mediaeval men, but as a universal law: substance is constant while form changes according to that law. Spenser states this in the sixth canto, third book of the Faerie Queene in the Garden of Adonis section, which deals with incarnation and transmigration of all lives. The babies represent substance and they are given form in earthly existence. Then they return and after ages they go back to earth again. Here we have a philosophical discussion of the relation between variable form and eternal substance. Form is subject to decay; substance is eternal. But Love is the creator of all things. Thus love is a part of both the physical and the spiritual, which brings us back to the starting point.

Curiously enough, Spenser mixes his classical mythology with his Christian teaching. While Venus is the creator of all things, yet all power comes from God and the only permanence is with Him.

Spenser's conclusion was that while only substance is eternal, the physical temporary form is important too, as a phase of the permanent. This is the same Renaissance emphasis on this world. Spenser compromised again; he ignored neither

this world nor the next, but he believed in cultivating the material with a view toward perfecting the spiritual form, which to be permanent had to be perfect. This is why Spenser dwelt on the all-round development of man. Spenser's ideal knights succeed because they have a perfect balance of the qualities that men should have--Temperance, Justice, and Courtesy, all of which go to make up the all-inclusive Magnificence.

But a view of philosophy would not be complete without a consideration of his concept of poetry as an art and his view of the poet's place among men. In this he followed the Pleiade writers very closely.

In the first place, Spenser had an aim very much like that of the Pleiade; he set out to make English poetry as great in kind, style, and thought as the poetry of any other country at any time. To do this he had to discover the things that made poetry great; therefore, he went to the Romans, the Italians, and the French to search out their best qualities which he later put into his own work. Nor did Spenser abandon the achievements of the old poets of his won country, as had the French. And even before he could begin, Spenser had to build up the mechanics of poetry--the language, style, and verse--in order to make it adequate for his purposes. The Pleiade writers had had this problem before him. This is the justification for Spenser's imitation; having no precedent at home, he had to go outside for his ideas, for in other countries the various problems had

already been met and solved. Like every good apprentice, he began by copying and by this copying he learned the craft so that later he could work independently.

Poetry was not only to be great artistically but it must have thought content, too. Spenser had a moral purpose in mind. He made his poetry political because he was trying to lead the people of his day into right action. This was for his contemporaries; it would not be universal. Rather, it would limit his poetry. But Spenser had a larger aim; he was going to portray the ideal life, a moral teaching for the guidance of men both in his time and in the future.

This was an immense task for any one poet. The complexity of it resulted in confusion. But what he did accomplish showed him to be a great poet.

Spenser certainlyhad the genius for this immense task, but he could not have carried it out, even with all his energy, had he not had behind it all an abiding faith in his mission and in English poetry. Even though it was heartrending not to be recognized and rewarded for his genius, he still had the faith and courage to contunue. If he was disappointed in his material reward, then he would work for the future. This is set forth admirably in the October eclogue. We have Spenser's material side in Cuddie and his idealist side in Poers. Cuddie is disgusted; he criticizes the public for not receiving poetry better. There is no reward for writing poetry. But Piers tells

him to go on writing and stick to his own high aspirations in spite of it all. Cuddie argues that poetry has degraded and that he might not succeed. But Piers says poetry will improve if only the poets will follow inspiration. And this is what Spenser did. As Piers, his better self, suggested, he turned from pastorals to the deeds of knights and followed his own inspiration. In spite of all criticism and lack of praise, he persevered until he had improved poetry and achieved immortality, at least as far as we are concerned.

We, centuries later, are only stating what Spenser came to be certain of, for he believed wholeheartedly in the immortality of poetry and poets. The Pleiade had taught him to have such faith; it had come to them in turn from Italy and was originally of classical origin. This belief in immortality was a Renaissance characteristic and it was reasonable, for though Rome had fallen, the work of Virgil, Ovid, and other Romans still remained to prove the fact.

Spenser had not originally the reliance on this immortality that his later works show. Copying Du Bellay in his early works, he was bound to go through the same doubts that the earlier French writer had experienced.

> Hope ye, my verses, that posterity
> Of age ensuing shall you ever read?

he wrote in the Ruins of Rome, No. 32. And in Ruins of Time, he became more confident. Though great deeds would be forgotten,

poetry would be remembered:

> But such as neither of themselves can sing,
> Nor yet are sung of others for reward,
> Die in obscure oblivion, as the thing
> That never was, ne ever with regard
> Their names shall of the later age be heard,
> But shall in rusty darkness ever lie
> Unless they mentioned be with infamy.

But

> For deeds do die, however nobly done,
> And thoughts of men do as themselves decay,
> But wise words, taught in numbers for to run,
> Recorded by the muses, live for ay . . . .

Later in the Faerie Queene Spenser lost confidence, and in his invocation to Chaucer while continuing the Squire's Tale he wrote:

> O cursed Eld! the cankerworm of writs,
> How may these rimes, so rude as doth appeare,
> Hope to endure, sith workes of heavenly wits
> Are quite devourd and brought to nought by
> little bits? (IV,ii,33)

But Spenser regained confidence finally. In the dedication of the poem he conferred immortality on the High Admiral with an assurance that left no room for doubt. This power to confer immortality was correlative with the immortality of poetry, as we have noted with the French writers. The poet had such great faith in his immortality that he could even give it to others. We find its greatest expression in the Amoretti, as in Sonnet LXXV.

> My verse your virtues rare shall eternize,
> And in the heavens write your glorious name.

Like the Pleiade before him, Spenser based his claim to immortality on something more than historical evidence. Poetry was the gift of God. Spenser wrote:

> Such secret comfort, and such heavenly pleasures,
> Ye sacred imps that on Parnaso dwell,
> And there the keeping have of learnings threasures,
> Which doe the worldly riches farre excell,
> Into the mindes of mortall men do well,
> And goodly fury into them infuse.(Faerie Queene,VI, Intro., ii.)

Just as with Du Bellay, Spenser, too, thought of the Muses as representative of the power of God, not just pretty classical figures of speech.

The gift of poetry was given by the Muses to a chosen few. That made it an exalted calling not to be attempted by ordinary men. Poetry had in all ages been taken up by the poet-apes and degraded and the people no longer valued good poetry but praised the work of these false poets. This is set forth in the Tears of the Muses. All the Muses are in despair, for barbarism has returned and knowledge is scorned not only by the common people but by the great, who should be its patrons. The Muses can find nothing to praise. There are a few good poets left, but the favors are granted to vile rhymsters.

Poetry was to be taken up only by those few consecrated to it from birth. It was a divine gift, but the poet was not to leave it at that. In the words of E. K., poetry was 'a divine gift and heavenly instinct not to be got by labour and learning, but adorned with both, ...' As someone has

so neatly put it, "Poeta nascitur, non fit, but once nascitur, it is the poet's duty to fit himself." Since God had given Spenser immortality, he was responsible to God and would make the most of himself so that he could make poetry great again, as great as it had been in classical times. Then he would deserve the immortality which came from God.

To express such exalted ideals, Spenser had to make many reforms in English poetry and we may now proceed to a more detailed account of his program. We shall find Spenser following the Pleiade in the kinds of poetry he chose as the skeleton for the support of his ideas.

Fate decreed that Spenser should deal with sonnets in his early work. Wyatt and Surrey had adapted the sonnet into English verse, but Spenser chose to take the French for his models. In 1591 appeared Spenser's Complaints, at the close of which came translations from Du Bellay's Songes, called the Visions of Bellay, and from Marot's translation of Petrarch, entitled Visions of Petrarch. It is probable that these poems published in the Complaints are revisions of an earlier draft, especially since Spenser gave his Petrarch series the title, Visions of Petrarch, formerly translated. And we find English translations of most of these Visions in Van der Noot's Theatre for Worldlings of 1569. There were three editions of the Theatre. The edition of 1568 was in French and contained the

Songes and the Epigrammes of Marot's version of Petrarch. Then in the next year appeared the English version, where the poems appeared in the same order as in the French version. This is the edition in which most critics think Spenser had a hand, although his name is not mentioned. It was published by the same man who in 1580 published the Harvey-Spenser correspondence.

Until 1891 most critics agreed that Spenser did do the 1569 translations and revised them in his Complaints. In 1891, however, Professor Koeppel compared the two sets of translations and concluded that only the Visions of Bellay of 1591 were by Spenser. It is true that the Visions in the Complaints differ in many respects from the translations of 1569. The later work is a much freer translation and contains inaccuracies of French not found in the earlier poems. But, in answer to Koeppel, other critics have shown that similarities between the Theatre versions and other translations by Spenser make it fairly certain that Spenser did work with the early poems. J.B. Fletcher has proved by aesthetic, metrical, and mathematical tests that all four are by one and the same author. In all four series we find Spenser's characteristic archaised spelling, his archaic forms, Spenserian phrases and Spenserian imagery. Mr. Fletcher points out that heroic verse came to be fossilized, to have certain fixed rules--just ten syllables, feet invariably

iambic and the caesura always after the fourth syllable. Now Spenser revived true heroic verse in his Shepherd's Calendar and put away these artificial rules. We find the heroic verse in the translations made for the Theatre to be of the same kind. There is the same variety in feet and in the caesura which marked Spenser's second work. This proves, according to Fletcher, that Spenser wrote the '69 versions. There is further mathematical proof, too, says Fletcher. By comparing the percentage of the number of lines that the several types of caesura occur in the Shepherd's Calendar and in the Visions of Bellay of '69, Fletcher finds that the close mathematical equivalence is most enlightening. There is just a very slight difference, which may be accounted for by the increased conservatism of the older Spenser. Fletcher points out that such an equivalence in two poets, even at a later period of literature when variety in caesura was widely practiced, would be marvelous and in Spenser's period it would be a miracle. This test proves that Spenser wrote the Visions of Bellay of '69.[6] Besides this proof, it is evident that the older Spenser would be likely to translate more freely, and also, the exigencies of metrical form required a freer translation. The six Epigrammes of the Theatre are in twelve-line stanzas, except for visions one and three, which

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[6] J. B. Fletcher, "Spenser and the Theatre of Worldlings." Modern Language Notes, XIII (1898), p. 409.

Spenser made into sonnets by adding a couplet. In the Complaints all the visions are in regular Elizabethan sonnets. In the case of the Bellay poems, the unrhymed quatorzains of the Theatre were all translated into regular sonnet stanzas.

We have said that Spenser early translated Marot's sonnets in the Visions of Petrarch, and in the November Eclogue of the Shepherd's Calendar he translated the Queen Mother sonnets by the same author. It was from Du Bellay, however, that Spenser took most of his inspiration, for not only did he begin by translating Du Bellay's Visions, as we have seen, but he copied Du Bellay's sonnets in Ruins of Rome and even in the mature Amoretti, he is said to have imitated some of Du Bellay's Olive sonnet-sequence. H. S. V. Jones says of Du Bellay's attraction for Spenser:

> It was his rich vein of romantic sentiment which must have attracted the youthful Spenser. However early and imperfect the translations they show a significent tendency in the development of the poet's taste, which was catholic enough to relish poets so strikingly dissimilar as Du Bellay and Marot.[7]

Later in his career, Spenser turned for sonnet inspiration to the minor poet Desportes, who seems to have a greater English popularity than Marot or his junior Du Bellay. It was indirectly through Desportes' poems that Spenser borrowed from

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[7] H. S. V. Jones, Handbook, p. 109.

Petrarch's Laura. Mr. Lee was the first to trace back to Desportes two of the sonnets of the Amoretti, Sonnets XV and LXVIII.[8] The similarity between Desportes' sonnet in Diane, I, xxxii. and Spenser's Sonnet XV is evident:

> Marchands, qui recherchez tout le rivage more
> Du froid septentrion, et qui, sans reposer,
> A cent mille dangers vous allez exposer
> Pour un gain incertain, qui vos esprits devore,
> Venez seulement voir la beaute qu j'adore
> Et par quelle richesse elle a sceu m'attiser
> Et je sais seur qu'apres vous ne pourrez prser
> Le plus rare tresor dont l'Afrique se dore.
> Voyez les filets d'or de ce chef blondissant,
> L'eclat de ces rubis, ce coral rougissant,
> Ce cristal, cet ebene, et ces graces divines,
> Cet argent, cet yvoire; et ne vous contentez
> Qu'on ne vous montre encor mille autres raretez,
> Mille beaux diamans et mille perles fines.
>
> Ye tradeful merchants, that with weary toil
> Do seek most precious things to make your gain,
> And both the Indies of their treasure spoil,
> What needeth you to seek so far in vain?
> For lo, my love doth in herself contain
> All this world's riches that may far be found:
> If sapphires, lo, her eyes be sapphires plain;
> If rubies, lo, her lips be rubies sound;
> If pearls, her teeth be pearls, both pure and round;
> If ivory, her forehead ivory ween;
> If gold, her locks are finest gold on ground;
> If silver, her fair hands are silver sheen;
> But that which fairest is, but few behold.
> Her mind adorned with virtues manifold.[9]

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[8] Sidney Lee, Elizabethan Sonnets (New York: Chas. Scribner's Sons, 1904), pp. xciiff.

[9] Sidney Lee, "The Elizabethan Sonnet." The Cambridge History of English Literature, III, p. 261.

Here Spenser paraphrases the original, rather than literally translating it. We cannot ever say that Spenser borrows slavishly, but the idea is the same, as are some of the phrases. Yet we must note that here as always, he has made the poem his by the characteristic touch of Platonism at the end. These last two lines clinch the poem because they are swift and direct. The last two lines of Desportes are only elaborate verse, a careful conceit.

Later evidence shows that Spenser was far more indebted to Desportes than Mr. Lee had stated. Kastner has illustrated a number of examples. Sonnet XVIII is a condensation of Sonnet LI of Les Amours d'Hippolyte(Oeuvres, ed. Michiels, p. 151):

L'eau tombant d'un lieu haut goute a goute a puissance
Contre les marbres durs, cavez finablement
Et le sang du lion force le diament,
Bien qu'il face a l'enclume et au feu resistance.
La flamme retenue en fin par violence
Brise la pierre vive, et rompt l'empeschement;
Les aquilons mutins, soufflans horriblement,
Tombant le chesne vieux, qui fait plus de deffance,
Mais moy, maudit Amour, nuict et jour souspirant,
Et de mes yeux meurtris tant de larmes tirant.
Tant de sang de ma Playe, et de feux de mon ame;
Je ne puis amollir une dure beaute,
Oui, las! tout au contraire accroist sa cruaute
Par mes pleurs, par mon sang, mes soupirs et ma flame.

The rolling wheel, that runneth often round,
The hardest steel in tract of time doth tear:
And drizzling drops, that often do redound,
The firmest flint doth in continuance wear:
Yet cannot I, with many a dropping tear
And long entreaty, soften her hard heart;
That she will once vouchsafe my plaint to hear,
Or look with pity on my painful smart;
But, when I plead, she bids me play my part;

And, when I weep, she says, 'Tears are but water',
And, when I sigh she says, 'I know the art':
And, when I wail she turns herself to laughter.
So do I weep, and wail, and plead in vain,
Whiles she as steel and flint doth still remain.

Sonnet XXII is also a paraphrase of Sonnet XLIII of Diane I (Oeuvres, p. 31.):

Solitaire et pensif, dans un bois ecarte,
Bien loin du populaire et de la tourbe espece,
Je veux bastir un temple a ma fiere deese,
Pour apprendre mes voeux a sa divinite.
La, de jour et de nuit, par moy sera chante
Le pouvoir de ses yeux, sa gloire et sa hautesse;
Et devot, son beau nom j'invoqueray sans cesse,
Quant je seray presse de quelque adversite.
Mon oeil sera la lampe ardant continuelle,
Devant l'image saint d'une dame si belle;
Mon corps sera l'autel, et mes soupirs les voeux.
Par milles et mille vers je chanteray l'office,
Puis, espanchant mes pleurs et coupant mes cheveux,
J'y feray tous les jours de mon coeur sacrifice.

This holy season, fit to fast and pray,
Men to devotion ought to be inclined;
Therefore, I likewise, on so holy day,
For my sweet saint some service fit will find.
Her temple fair is built within my mind,
In which her glorious image placed is,
On which my thoughts do day and night attend,
Like sacred priests that never think amiss.
There I to her, as th'author of my bliss,
Will build an altar to appease her ire;
And on the same my heart will sacrifice,
Burning in flames of pure and chaste desire;
The which vouchsafe, O goddess, to accept,
Amongst thy dearest relics to be kept.

Kastner goes on to illustrate that Sonnets LXIX, X, XLVIII, LX of the Amoretti are borrowed respectively from Sonnets XI of Cleonice (Oeuvres, p. 184.), LIII of Les Amours d'Hippolyte, LXXX of Diane II, and IV of Cleonice. In other

poems the borrowing is confined to quatrains or tercets. Spenser has also copied similes and conceits which Desportes used.[10]

English borrowing of French verse was so common that we find both Daniel and Spenser working on the same sonnet, as Mr. Lee points out.[11] The sonnet is the eighteenth in Desportes' Amours d'Hippolyte which begins:

> Pourquoi si folement croyez-vous a un verre,
> Voulant voir les beautez que vous avez des cieux?
> Mirez-vous dessus moy pour les connoistre mieux,
> Et voyez de quels traits vostre bel oeil m'enferre.

Daniel rendered the passage thus (Delia, XXXII):

> Why doth my mistress credit so her glass,
> Gazing her beauty, deigned her by the skies?
> And doth not rather look on him, alas!
> Whose state best shows the force of murdering eyes?

Spenser's version is freer (Amoretti, XLV):

> Leave, lady, in your glass of crystal clean,
> Your goodly self for evermore to view:
> And in my self, my inward self, I mean,
> Most lively like behold your semblance true.

Mr. Lee also points out that Spenser's opening quatrian (No. XII) which Mr. Lee had compared with a sonnet by Desportes (Diane, I, XLIII) suggests another of Desportes' sonnets in Diane (II, XLVI), beginning 'Je m'estoy dans le temple un dimanche rendu.' The poet describes how he saw his mistress at prayer in church on Easter Day. Spenser, in Amoretti (LXVIII), also deals with

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[10] L. Kastner, "Spenser's 'Amoretti' and Desportes." Modern Language Review, IV (1908-9), pp. 66f.

[11] S. Lee, The French Renaissance in England, pp. 262f.

Easter, and probably has in mind Desportes's sonnet as well as four on the same theme by Du Bellay (Olive, CVIII,CXI).[12]

Another kind of poetry recommended by the Pleiade and adopted by Spenser was the eclogue. This was a type new to the Elizabethans. The eclogue is a kind of pastoral poetry in which poets in the disguise of shepherds converse and praise the simple life. The word 'shepherd' had for a long time meant scholar and poet and the shepherd had been an allegorical disguise for the pastor of souls. In the past the shepherd had also been a critic of public affairs, so the shepherd was a good disguise for Spenser, and the eclogue was a most suitable form for his purpose. Spenser was the shepherd guiding, or at least, trying to guide, his flock--humanity--and we can find him in the eclogue under the name of Colin, the poet-shepherd. Under the disguise of a pastoral, Spenser was criticizing public affairs. It was not only a safe, but an effective method.

Edmund Kirke in his Epistle had mentioned the models that Spenser had followed in writing the Shepherd's Calendar. These models were the same as those which Du Bellay had recommended, but Kirke added three more. The poets recommended by E. K. were: Theocritus, Virgil, Mantuan, Petrarque, Boccace, Marot, Sanazarus, and also 'divers other excellent both Italian and French Poetes, whose foting this author every where follow-

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[12] Ibid., n., p. 263.

eth; yet so as few, but they be wel sented, can trace him out.' Fletcher notes the French spelling given to the names of Petrarch and Boccaccio. And E. K.'s 'other French Poetes' are assuredly the Pleiade group. We must also note that Du Bellay praised the Eclogue of Marot, which may have led Spenser to turn to Marot's Eclogue in writing his Calendar, for the last two Eclogues are paraphrases of Marot's Eclogue on the death of Madame Loyse and of his Eclogue, Pan et Robin.

Not only were Spenser's last two Eclogues copied from Marot, but January and August were modelled on Theocritus, and July, September, and October were taken from Mantuan. This is further evidence that Spenser followed French advice, since the Pleiade poets had recommended classic authors as models.

Another genre suggested by Du Bellay and adopted by Spenser was the elegy. We find this elegy, the Lament to Dido, in the November Eclogue of the Shepherd's Calendar and it has been takenover from Marot since the whole eclogue is copied from the French poet. Spenser's elegy is one of the early elegies in Elizabethan poetry. Both Spenser and Marot copied the Greeks Bion and Moscus as the earliest writers of elegies and then Theocritus. Spenser's elegy is musical and well written and it is no wonder that E. K. says he far surpassed Marot.

A fourth type of poetry taken over by Spenser is the satire. Spenser's Mother Hubbard's Tale is an early example of the satire and a very good one. It satirized affairs of church

and state. Spenser used the heroic couplet and established a link between Chaucer and the great satirical poets of the eighteenth century. To some extent Spenser's Gnat is also a satire.

The epigram is a fifth type adopted from the French by Spenser. Spenser early called his Visions of Petrarch 'epigrammes', probably because that was the title Marot had given them and they were originally in twelve lines, but Spenser put them in sonnet length.

The four poems which come between the Amoretti and the Epithalamion are true epigrams, derived from Anacreon and very popular in the Alexandrian period of Greek literature. Spenser's Cupid and the Bee fable follows Ronsard's famous rendering much more closely than it follows the original Greek. Here is Ronsard's version: Odes, IV, 16.

Le petit enfant Amour
Cueilloit les fleurs a l'entour
D'une ruche ou les avettes
Font leurs petites logettes.
Comme il les alloit cueillant
Une avette sommeillant
Dans le fond d'une fleurette,
Loy pique la main douillette.
Si tost que piquee se vit,
Ah! je suis perdu (ce dit)
Et s'en-courant vers sa mere
Luy monstra sa playe amere:
Ma mere, voyez ma main,
Ce disoit Amour tout plein
De pleurs, voyez quelle enflure
M'a fait une esgratignure.
Alors Venus se sou-rit
Et en le baisant le prit,
Puis sa main loy a souflee
Pour guarir sa playe enflee.
Qui t'a, dy moy, faux garcon,

Blesse de telle facon?
Sont-ce mes Graces riantes
De leurs aiguilles poignantes?
Nenny, c'est un serpenteau,
Qui vole au Printemps nouveau
Avecqui deux ailerettes
Ca et la sus les fleurettes.
Ah! vrayment je le cognois
(Dit Venus) les villageois
De la montagne d'Humette
Le surnomment Melissette.
Si doncques un animal
Si petit fait tant de mal,
Quand son halesne aspoinconne
La main de quelque personne,
Combien fais-tu de douleur
Au prix de loy, dans le coeur
De celuy en que tu iettes
Tes amoureuses sagettes?[13]

There is nothing in Anacreon to suggest Spenser's laughter of Venus, who 'could not choose but laugh at her sons fond game.' Also, when Spenser makes Cupid call the bee a 'fly' he doubtless had in mind the French poet's expression 'mouche a miel', ie., the honey bee.[14]

It must be noted that the ode was another form popular in France and adopted by the English, but we find no odes in Spenser's work.

Spenser did adopt the hymn which Ronsard had made so famous. In his Four Hymns Spenser closely followed Ronsard in the revival of the genre. His conception was Ronsard's. Like Ronsard, Spenser later christianized his hymns. His first two had been Platonic, but because of the objections of two femi-

[13] H. S. V. Jones, Handbook, p. 350.
[14] S. Lee, op. cit., p. 219.

nine friends, he wrote two more hymns with the emphasis on the Christian sentiments. However, they are not so different from the first attempts and since Spenser did not recall his first hymns, he evidently admired them, probably because of their esthetic value.

We cannot overlook the little lyric poem dealing with the floral pageantry of Spring and Summer which is to be found in the Shepherd's Calendar, Eclogue IV, April. Spenser adopted a catalogue of flowers which is quite Ronsardian: Here are the strophes of Ronsard:

Les en chanteront les oeillets
Vermeillets,
Ou du lis la fleur argentee
Ou celle qui c'est par les priz
Diaprez
Du sang des princes enfantee.
L'aubepin et l'eglantine
Et le thym,
L'oeillet, le lis et les roses,
En cette belle saison,
A foison,
Montrent leurs robes ecloses.

Here is Spenser's poem:

Bring hither the pink and purple columbine,
With gelliflowers:
Bring coronations and sops-in-wine,
Worn of paramours:
Strew me the ground with daffadowndillies,
With cowslips, and kingcups, and loved lilies.
The pretty paunce
And the chevisaunce
Shall match with the fair fleur de lice.[15]

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[15] Ibid., p. 224.

The heroic or epic was the most important type of poetry advised by Du Bellay which Spenser adopted. Du Bellay's words to the New Poet must have appealed to Spenser for he came near Du Bellay's qualifications. His high conception of the poet had led him to reform English and to Harvey he had said, "Why 'a God's name, may not we, as else the Greeks, have the kingdom of our own language? In his desire to make English as great as the classic tongues, Spenser probably reasoned that English needed a great epic to establish its fame. Of necessity, he had to look elsewhere for his models. Du Bellay counseled using Ariosto as a model and when Spenser admitted to Harvey that he had begun imitating Ariosto, Harvey said on that subject:

> I am voyde of all iudgement if your Nine Comedies . . . . come not nearer Ariostoes comeidies, ... than that Elvish Queene doth to his Orlando Furioso, which not withstanding, you will needes seem to emulate, and hope to overgo, as you flatly professed yourself in one of your last Letters.

We note Harvey's deprecatory attitude toward Ariosto. He scorned Ariosto's inclusion of romantic material and his loose Italian form rather than the classic and for these reasons he had tried to persuade Spenser not to write the <u>Faerie Queene</u>. Harvey's scorn of Ariosto may have led Spenser to depend more on Tasso as a model in his later work on the epic. But Spenser's work remained romantic and non-classic in form. Spenser chose to include old romances as Du Bellay had suggested and he defied Harvey. Spenser wrote to Raleigh:

> I chose the historie of King Arthur . . . . in which I have followed all the antique Poets historicall: first, Homere, ... then Virgil . . . . after him Ariosto . . .

As Du Bellay advised, Spenser was learned and moralistic in the treatment of his Romantic material. Spenser followed Du Bellay's advice, too, in the use of old chronicles in condensed form, which were to be preserved in the epic. In the Faerie Queene, II, ix and III, iii he summarized the old English chronicle of Geoffrey of Monmouth.[16]

Spenser seems to have followed Ronsard no less than Du Bellay, for both Ronsard and Spenser echoed the writer of the Deffense, but they expanded his views. Both Ronsard and Spenser undertook to surpass Ariosto; both took from Ariosto's epic Orlando Furioso the recounting of certain mythical Trojan-descended ancestors of the ruling house--Spenser in Artegal and Britomart, the ancestors of Queen Elizabeth-- and both use national chronicles, as we have noted. In the use of romantic material of single combat with giants, the fondness for personified abstractions and virtues and vices, the use of allegorical pageant, the retarding of the narrative by long descriptions, the setting of one year as the time limit for an epic, all are common to both men.

Having seen that Spenser followed the Pleiade's advice

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[16]Jefferson B. Fletcher, "Areopagus and Pleiade." Journal of Germanic Philology, II (1898-9), p. 429-453.

in the kinds of poetry he chose, we may now proceed to a consideration of his reforms in the language and style of English poetry. Here too, Spenser followed the Pleiade's program very closely.

Spenser probably came into contact with the problem of diction first through Mulcaster, who had an alert and original mind. We have said that he was well acquainted with French literature and indeed he agreed with the Pleiade writers in his literary tenets. Mulcaster, too, was inspired by a patriotic motive. The vernacular was as worthy of cultivation as Latin or Greek. All languages were equal in their innate possibilities. Their beauty was from cultivation. Wisdom travelled from Egypt to Greece, from Greece to Rome, and modern languages would now inherit it. In regard to the use of foreign words, he echoed the words of the Pleiade that all kinds of words should be used to enrich the language. He said that he used Englsih words chiefly, but if he needed a foreign word, he used it and by repeated usings, gave it a well-known place in the language. He used terms not only as a necessity, but as a means of making the language artistic as well as useful. Mulcaster, as well as Du Bellay, thought the best poetry appealed to the cultivated only and that it was the duty of the reader to make an attempt at understanding it. Acquaintance would make it understandable. Many people knew the Latin tongue better than their own for

that reason. Spenser's teacher recognized that the poet must have the freedom to lead in the development of his mother tongue.[17] Spenser, then, was educated by a man whose views conflicted with those of most learned men of his day and one who agreed with the Pleiade writers. So Spenser from his youth had the Pleiade tradition in his mind. But Spenser was also acquainted with the English tradition which was conservative and nationalistic.

Spenser early began to use archaisms in his Calendar, and continued to use them. Among the English writers as well as among the French there was a division of opinion in regard to the use of archaic words. Sidney frowned on their immoderate use and he refused to allow Spenser's rustic language in the Calendar. But in his works we can see that Sidney used archaic terms, nevertheless. Archaisms became a predominant characteristic of Spenser's style: he used them mainly for decorum, in order to suit the style to the subject.

Critics generally agreed with Spenser in his use of archaic language. E. K. was one who praised him. Looking back on Spenser's time, Gregory Smith wrote a lasting justification of Spenser. He said that Spenser had endeavored to restore certain good English words long out of use, and this restoration had helped cure some of the barrenness of English poetic lan-

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[17] W. L. Renwick, "Mulcaster and Du Bellay." Modern Language Review, XVII (Jan., 1922), p. 28.

guage. He criticized harshly these numerous men who denied Spenser's right to use ancient words.[18]

The use of provincial dialects offered further controversy. Spenser used provincial words for rusticity in the Calendar. Sidney criticized Spenser's use of them.

Among learned accretions, foreign borrowings next occupy our attention. Certainly the Pleiade recommended them and Spenser even put these words into the mouths of his rustics, as Fletcher notes.[19] These shepherds carry their money in crumenalls (Sh. Cal., IX, i, 119). Spenser was one of the richest word-makers in English: he borrowed from Greek, Latin, Italian, and French. Sometimes Spenser's rhyme led him to use these words. Draper cites an example where Spenser chose "tinct" to rhyme with the difficult word "extinct". He was translating Marot closely and had to find a word. Marot used no such word or even suggested it.[20]

Many English critics deplored the use of foreign borrowings. E.K. himself said that poets "have made our English tongue a gallimaufray or hodgepodge of al other speches". Wilson, Cheke, and Ascham agreed with E. K. But Spenser was, after all,

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18 V. L. Renwick, "The Critical Origins of Spenser's Diction." Modern Language Review, XVII (Jan., 1922), p. 4.

19 J. B. Fletcher, op. cit., pp. 439-440.

20 John W. Draper, "Glosses to Spenser's 'Shepheardes Calender.'" Journal of English and Germanic Philology, XVIII (Jan., 1919), p. 562.

not extreme, for when averaged, the foreign element in his language totalled only 14%.[21] Spenser drew chiefly upon English sources in enriching his vocabulary. He avoided "ink-horn terms" for the most part. He borrowed from the French as much as from any other language, but these French words were drawn from the vocabulary of chivalry for purposes of decorum. It would look as though Spenser, as well as the Pleiade writers, were trying to mediate between the humanists and the radicals.

Of the second class of learned words-technical terms-Spenser used many, from the arts, professions, and trades, and especially from chivalry. From music he borrowed "minime" and "divide". From architecture we have:

> It was a bridge y built in goodly wise,
> With curious Corbes and pendants graven faire,
> And arched all with proches, did arize
> On stately pillours, fram'd after the Doric guize.(F.Q., IV, x, 6.)

He borrowed from law the following:

> From every worke he chalenged essoyne.(F.Q.,I, iv,2.)

> . . . . happie victorie
> Gainst him, that had them long opprest with tort.(F.Q., I, xii, 4.)

> Ne ought he car'd, whom he endamaged
> By tortious wrong . . . .(F.Q., VI, vii, 36.)

> The damzel was attakt, and shortly brought
> Unto the barre, where as she was arrayned.
> But she would plead . . . .(F.Q., VI, vii, 36.)

Armoury lent to him 'curiets and bases fit for fight.'(V, V. 20).

The following line shows the influence of archery:

[21] H. S. V. Jones, op. cit., p. 397.

Even at the markewhite of his hart she roved.

From seamanship we find:

His flaggy wings when forth he did display,
Were like two sayles, in which the hollow wind
Is gathered full, and worketh speedy way:
And els the pennes, that did his pinions bind,
Were like mayne-yards, with flying canvas lynd.
(F. Q., I, xi, 10)

Vere the maine sheete and bear up with the land.
(F. Q., xii, 1)

Said then the Boteman, Palmer stere aright,
And keep an even course (F. Q., II, xii, 3)

Like as a ship with dredfull storme long tost,
Having spent all her mastes and her ground-hold . . . .
(F. Q., IV, 1)

From chivalry we naturally have many terms:

First he his beard did shave, and fowly shent:
Then from him reft his shield, and it renversed,
And blotted out his armes with falshood blent,
And himselfe baffuld, and his armes unhurst . . . .
(F. Q., V,iii, 37.)

From among many hunting and hawking terms, we have:

See how he venteth into the wind. (Sh. Cal., Feb.,1,75)

His bevie of ladies bright (Apr., i, 118 and gloss.)

Mine eyes no more on Vanitie shall feed,
But seeled up with death . . . . (F. Q., V, ii, 54.)

Like to an Eagle in his kingly pride,
Soring through his wide Empire of the aire,
To weather his brode Sailes, by chaunce hath spide
A Goshawke, which hath seized for her share
Uppon some fowle, that should her feast prepare;
With dreadful force he flies at her bylieu,
That with his source, which none enduren dare,
Her from the quarrey he away doth drive
And from her griping pounce the greedy prey doth rive.
(F. Q., V, iv, 42.)

And we find 'the mountenance of flight' from archery.

Among the third class of learned words, new makings, we find among Spenser's work such words as 'dreriment', 'embrave', 'Doyaunce', 'cuffling' for scuffling, and many others.

The use of compound epithets was one of the most conspiciuous gifts given to England by the Pleiade. There was nothing like it in England before its introduction there. Sidney was the first to adopt Ronsard's 'vocables composez'. We find many compound epithets in Spenser's sonnets and in his Faerie Queene. Most of them are verbal adjectives modifying nouns, such as air-cutting. Froth-fomy steed is a noun-adjective combination. Dead-doing hand and snakie-paced are combinations of verbal adjectives and adjectives. Luke-warm and light-foot, a combination of nouns and adjectives, are terms we still use, and are like the French tiede-chaud and pied-leger. Still another made up of two adjectives and a noun is true-love-wise. Filthy-feculent, silver-scaly are effective double adjectives while love-lads, woman-wight, gor-blood, and thunder-dartes are good double nouns. Compound verbs and adverbs include out-lanced and over-wrestled. A compound verb is the effective thunder-drive to hell.

In accordance with the poet's freedom in the use of language, Spenser did not hesitate to alter words for convenience of rhyme and metre. He was bolder than either Du Bellay or Ronsard in the use of poetic license. A good illustration

is to be found in the Faerie Queene, III, vi, 4, where Chrysogonee is spelled with a double 'e' and the accent is on the last syllable for the sake of the metre as well as the rhyme. in III,v, 5, the name is spelled Chrysogone and the accent is on the next to the last syllable in order to accord with the metre and rhyme.

Syntax came next in language enrichment, but while Spenser and other English writers followed French innovations in the matter, their writing never became as artificial as that of the French.

All in all, the English writers far outdid the French in the use of the latter's innovations in language. Spenser went farthest in archaic diction, and although Sidney rivalled Spenser in compound terms, Spenser used many. His terms were never extravagant but often effective.

After enriching the vocabulary so that the resulting language was adequate for any type of writing, Spenser used this vocabulary in his new style. It was from his usage of the language that Spenser deduced the principles. In taking for granted the poet's right to do this he was adopting a European idea and proved himself to be a part of the European movement.

Spenser made his own rules for style, but he had taken the ideas from the French. In improving the style of poetry, he considered unity first. From Ronsard and the classics he had learned of form, and by giving his poetry a well rounded

form he gave it unity. Form came to be one of the first considerations in his style.

Next, Spenser turned to the suiting of style to purpose. The French had recognized the principle of decorum. Spenser succeeded admirably in this; as we think of his works individually, we note the plainness of Mother Hubbard's Tale, the flowery quality of Muiopotmos, the rustic simplicity of the Shepherd's Calendar, and the courtly chivalric style of the Faerie Queene. It is here that Spenser used his new vocabulary to make his style suit his subject. There were dialectic and rustic terms in the Shepherd's Calendar, and the Faerie Queene abounds in archaisms and terms of chivalry and court life.

Not only did Spenser follow the Pleiade in giving his poetry form and a style suitable to the subject, but he also copied the French dicta in the use of classical allusion and paraphrase. English poetry became overladen with classical allusion, and Spenser was no exception. Indeed, to Lodge, his contemporary, Spenser was a classical scholar rather than a poet, so much classical material did he use.

And Spenser used circumlocution to the point of tediousness. It is one criticism made of the Faerie Queene, for it destroys the unity. Fletcher points out that where Spenser could have used one line, he used four.

> Now hath fair Phoebe, with her silver face,
> Thrice seen the shadows of this nether world,
> Sith last I left that honourable place,
> In which her royal presence is enroll'd. (II, iii, 44.)

He means, 'it is three months since I left her palace.'[22] This is just one of multitudinous examples.

But no matter how profuse he became or how much he copied the Pleiade, Spenser, together with the other great Elizabethans Sidney and Shakespeare, far surpassed the French writers. We see this especially in the sonnets. While their style is ample, the English did not, like the French, concentrate on it until it became artificial and turgid. To the English the thought, the content, of the poem was more important. While Ronsard was bound by court etiquette, Spenser was free to write as he wished, especially since he was without court preferment. Though we see much artificiality and much of the conventional in Spenser's sonnets, there is his distinctive thought which set him apart and makes his poetry live.

So far we have seen that Spenser followed the rules laid down by the Pleiade for the purpose of enriching the language. Poets, who were to have complete freedom, were to study the classics and copy the kinds of poetry used. From their own language they were to take archaic and dialectic terms and they were also to use foreign and classical words, all with discretion. Poets were also to use technical words, as well as newly invented ones. To beautify the language, they created a

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[22] Fletcher, "Areopagus and Pleiade.", p. 444.

'style noble' which used classical allusion and paraphrase. While Ronsard's court life led him to concentrate more on style and less on thought, Spenser had more freedom; so his poetry is distinctive for its thought.

Now the poet has the kinds of poetry to work with; his language is refined and enlarged; he has a stately rhetoric full of allusion and circumlocution. There remains the task of 'setting all this fury of fine sound to music which shall at once fit and enhance its noble utterance.'[23]

Just as Spenser had to create a new style for his poetry, he had to create a new versification. The two processes are really one; they are interdependent, for they style determines the metre and the poet's feeling for rhythm, his skill in varying it, determine his style, Spenser achieved a unity of these things, which made his poetry outstanding and established him as a true poet.

The Shepherd's Calendar, Spenser's first important work, is interesting not alone for its subject matter but for the variety of metres which Spenser used. This seems to have been in the nature of experimentation; he used thirteen different kinds, but found only three satirfactory enough to use afterwards. The sixains of January and December, which had been used by both Marot and Ronsard, are important because the concluding

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[23] Ibid.

couplet of the sixain was to be used later in both the Spenserian sonnet and the Spenserian stanza as well as in the heroic couplet of Mother Hubbard's Tale . The linked quatrains of the dialogue in April and November are also notable because when they make a unit, as they do in Hobbinol's speeches in April, we have the eight-line stanza of Chaucer's Monk's Tale, which is usually regarded as the basis of the Spenserian stanza. And with the linking of the three quatrains in April (I,9-20), we have all the Spenserian sonnet except the final couplet. Thus we see the stanza forms later so famous in the process of development.

The Spenserian sonnet and the Spenserian stanza, when finally perfected, only go farther toward attesting to Spenser's versatility. They are a happy mixture of Spenser's own invention and the influence of other poets. While we find French influence, Spenser used these French ideas in making something highly original.

The form of the Spenserian sonnet was that which had been originated by Surrey, that is, the division into twelve lines plus the couplet. The rhyme scheme consisted of three quatrains, each alternately rhymed, with a rhyming couplet--ababbcbccdcdee. The linked quatrains, the last lines of the first and second quatrains rhyming respectively with the first lines of the second and third quatrains, which we found before in the Calendar, had been used in French poetry. But alternate rhymes and the

couplet were unknown abroad. Spenser followed the French fashion is restricting the total number of rhymes in a single sonnet to five instead of extending it to seven as was usual in England. In three sonnets he hade the final line an Alexandrine, which may have been taken from Ronsard, but we are not sure. He may habe taken the idea from the Spenserian stanza which he had been working with and if so, the alexandrine came from a different sonnce, as we shall see.

Spenser turned to Chaucer for his Faerie Queene stanza, and it is more than likely that he obtained the idea from Ronsard, who advised going back to old poets for models. For the Spenserian stanza, Spenser used the eight-line ballad stanas used by Chaucer in the Monk's Tale, as we have said. We have seen how in Hobbinol's speeches in April the quatrains made a unit which became the Spenserian stanza. The idea of using a concluding couplet on the c-rhyme might have come to him from the ottava rima, the rhyme royal, or the sixeline stanza used in the Calendar and used by the French, as we said.

We see that the less certain we are of Spenser's sources, the more sure we are that although Spenser might habe received the initial push from other authors, he continued under his own momentum to develop something outstanding as well as original.

Spenser's genius was shown more in the treatment of his metres than in his choice of them. In his time the metrical

system used was in a sad state. There was no agreement about it; the Latinists kept to a monotonously regular system, while on the other hand the verses of other poets were jingling and banal. Spenser had enough genius to see that while verse should keep to a pattern, the variations in rhythm which run along but never destroy the pattern, give poetry its beauty. As Renwick puts it: ". . . . good verse is like a river, which flows all in one direction, but carries on its surface the changing play of eddies and ripples."[24]

Spenser knew of three metrical systems: the Latin quantitative system, the syllabic system of the French, and the system of Chaucer. In the Latin system the verse was constructed of long and short syllables; in the French, each line contained a fixed number of syllables and the lines were bound together by rhyme; the Chaucerian system had a series of lines each containing a more or less fixed number of strong accents more or less regular. These three systems are very different, but all had the possibility of variation in rhythm. None of them exactly suited English, but Spenser experimented and learned from each. The result was something like Chaucer's compromise between the French syllabic style and the Latin style.

We have seen how the Areopagus experimented with the

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[24]William L. Renwick, Edmund Spenser (London: Edward Arnold and Co., 1925), p. 106.

Latin system in an attempt to improve the 'balde rymes' of the day. Both Spenser and Sidney may have followed Drant, who was the first to translate Horace's Ars Poetica in England. Now Drant is supposed to have been influenced by the Pleiade and this lays at the feet of the French writers the responsibility for enthusiasm over Horace and quantitative writing. Just at the time when Sidney was in Paris, Baif was experimenting with Latin verse. Another school in England following Ascham, which differed somewhat from the French school, was also experimenting. But whether or not the English followed the French or Ascham, their attempt was a failure. However, it was helpful to the youthful Spenser since it gave him practice in placing words to the best advantage, in the best order with regard to style and rhythm. Ronsard had councelled working for these things. This practice also taught Spenser to work with the phrase as the unit instead of the word.

In the French system the Pleiade poets set an example in varying the metre, and imitation of their poetry would teach the young Spenser not only variety of metre but how one line is related to those before and after it, which makes a group of lines a unit. The French used rhyme to unify their lines. In spite of the criticisms of the Humanists, Spenser used rhyme and the success of his rhymed poems more or less stifled their arguments that rhyme was barbaric. In the Shepherd's Calendar Spenser used several new rhyme schemes and we have noted that

he turned the blank verse poems of the Theatre into regular rhymed stanzas in his Complaints.

From the French Spenser learned not only the rule of the ear, but also that he could vary the accent and still keep regularity of syllables, although the heavy English accent would not permit him to do this as freely as the French could.

Spenser also experimented with the Chaucerian system, but he found it much too rough and heavy.

Spenser's problem was to reconcile the metrical pattern with the natural rhythm of the language. In this Spenser was helped by music. Ronsard had thought of verse as related to music and had recommended making verses masculine and feminine and varying the length of line in order to make verse musical. This created a variable rhythm which did not interrupt the regular metre. And these musical rhythms accorded with the rhythms of English syntax and vocabulary.

But in France, the alternation of masculine and feminine rhymes became an overworked device. It limited the poet and deadened the verse. The English were not held down by such a close following of rules and, as Legouis says: " . . . . it was more possible in England than in France to refine on the varieties of the stanzas for which France had supplied the model to multiply their types."[25]

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[25] Ibid., p. 166.

This musical sense, which Spenser had, led him to consider carefully the pauses in his verse, the caesura and the line-endings. Departing from the mechanical method the Latinists had of putting the caesura always in the same place in the line, Spenser varied the place of his caesura while observing at the same time the regular pauses of English speech. And he continued his rhythm from line to line, often making the end pause very slight.

Just as important as the movement of the rhythm was the sequence of vowels and consonants, and Spenser's verse is noted for its fluidity in this respect. He constructed his stanzas so that the series of short crisp words gradually led into a long sweeping cadence at the end.

Thus Spenser improved his versification by using his sense of music to create variable rhythms, still controlled by meter. By making a unity of style and verse he improved English poetry and established a precedent for later poets.

Since this has been a work of comparison, it has included throughout examples of ideas Spenser borrowed from members of the Pleiade group. These we have seen to range from the obvious to the uncertain. We can point out quite confidently that Spenser followed closely Pleiade rules for the writing of poetry and the improvement of the language. These things Spenser had to borrow. And we know that Spenser

acknowledged his early borrowings from Du Bellay. But when we attempt to trace influences in the poetry which Spenser offered as his own, we are treading on unsure ground. It is difficult to say, in comparing two poems with like themes or sentiments, whether one was influenced by the other, or whether it was mere coincidence. If Spenser's poem is a word for word translation, or even a paraphrase, it establishes the proof, but that is more often not the case. Therefore, in seeking to establish borrowings, we must be sure that both sentiment and language coincide with the French original before it is safe to say that one is copied. We must assume that authorities are aware of this and have considered well before they state that certain poems are borrowed. Yet there is still a most disconcerting lack of agreement among authorities. Mr. Dodge, for instance, criticizes Mr. Lee harshly for making some comparisons. He says:

> Mr. Lee seems to be never quite so well satisfied as when he has apparently demonstrated that such and such an Elizabethan sonnet cannot possibly be the record of personal experiences, because it is all imitation.

This is shown by his treatment of the 68th sonnet of Spenser's Amoretti.

> 'This sonnet', says Mr. Lee, 'was clearly suggested by Desportes' ejaculation at the same season which unexpectedly fills a niche in the poet's Amours de Diane' . . . . what have these two sonnets in common? Nothing whatever . . . . that two of them happened to write of similar experiences surely does not prove that one necessarily took his cue from the other.

Dodge goes on to disprove statements other authors have made.[26]

But the writer of the Edinburgh Review of January, 1907, whoever he may be, goes farthest in his criticism. He contends against the views of Mr. Lee and Mr. Wyndham that the sonneteering fashion which prevailed in Elizabethan England may, or may not have been set going by the Pleiade. What is true is that the Deffense bec me very popular in England and there were written several essays on the art of poetry which followed it closely, the best being Sidney's. And the Pleiade's metres were reproduced in England because the English adopted the metrical rules laid down by Du Bellay. But that does not prove there is imitation, says the writer. He goes on to say that while there were metres and various devices borrowed from France, the nature of the English tongue transformed these measures. And for a large number of metres there was enough precedent at home. Continuing, the critic states that discovering the extent of borrowing is not important and a waste of time, for Spenser's genius lies apart from it. It is true that Spenser translated Du Bellay at seventeen, that he was familiar with French and that not a few of his poems are mere translations, but in the works he lives by, he had absorbed these influences and had changed them into something English. The writer con-

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[26]Robert E. Dodge, "A Sermon on Source Hunting." Modern Philology, IX (1911), p. 214.

cluded that influences make or mar only small men--the poet-apes. As to the great poets, it is interesting to know what they learned, but that does not make their charm. That charm, in the words of Sidney, is 'whatsoever may make the too-loved earth more lovely . . . . With a tale forsooth he cometh unto you, with a tale which holdeth children from play, and old men from the chimney-corner.' And the fact that the poet so holds us can never be explained.[27]

The writer of the Edinburgh Review accuses Mr. Lee and others of 'splitting hairs' in pointing out particular borrowed poems, but is himself trivial in quarreling with them, it seems to me. True, the importance lies not in seeking the extent to which Spenser borrowed, but neither does it lie in ignoring imitation just because Spenser's genius lies apart from it. No one will deny that. But it is interesting to see what Spenser owed to others, since many great writers take their initial step in the footsteps of past writers whom they have studied. And the importance lies in the fact that the Pleiade inspired Spenser to take the leap into poetry, and with its guidance he supported himself until with his new poetry he was ready to strike out for himself and reveal his genius. It is this initial inspiration that Spenser received and this precedent in the matter of creating a new poetry with a new language that makes the influence of the Pleiade on Edmund Spenser important.

[27] "The Pleiade and the Elizabethans." Edinburgh Review, CV (Jan., 1907), pp. 353ff.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY

When the Renaissance reached France, the new intellectual stimulus led to the formation of the Pleiade group. In their higher conception of poetry, the Pleiade writers set out to make it capable of dealing with the highest themes. Du Bellay set forth these views in his Deffense et Illustration and he constructed a program for the improvement of French poetry which was necessary in the new conception of the art. Poets were to take as their models classical and Italian writings. They were to use the Italian sonnet form and such antique forms as the eglogue, the elegy, the satire, the epigram, the ode, the hymn, and the epic. This theory of imitation when too strictly followed was detrimental to the value of French poetry. Instead of assimilating ideas and then creating something original, the French poets stooped to merely copying classic writers. In this imitation they were content to copy the observations of other poets concerning life, while all great poetry springs from direct observation of life. It can be said in defense of these poets, however, that they wanted to bring the best thought to modern readers and made no pretention of its being their own. Ronsard, at least, attempted to go beyond imitation and do some creative work and there are writers who claim that from the early servile imitation of the classics the French gradually

liberated themselves and achieved individual work of the highest quality.

What the French did learn was that the style and language of poetry are different from that of prose. Methods for vocabulary enrichment were adopted; the French borrowed from provincial dialects; they revived old French words long out of use; they borrowed words and phrases from classical and foreign tongues; and they created new words by invention as well as by combining already existing words. The borrowing of foreign terms was greatly criticized and the French learned to use discretion in the matter, turning more to their own tongue than to Greek and Latin. However, not all of the French poets were as moderate as Rondard in borrowing.

French reforms in the matter of syntax were not so successful since too great an attention to sentence order led to artificiality. French could not be forced into the classical mold.

Great strides were made in versification and it may be said that the French did their most important work in this field. Not only were many new metrical combinations added to French peotry, including the revival of the all-important alexandrine, but the verse achieved perfection through harmonic variation and subtle cadences running through the verses. Sound and word combinations were developed to the full in order to bring about this perfect verse.

But while the French achieved a perfect verse, they were too satisfied with the externals to think of content--the real foundation of great poetry. They copied classic philosophy according to their theory of imitation. Although we find a mixture of pagan and Christian sentiment, it is hard to point to any one philosophy which was definitely theirs. We suspect that they had too great a pagan love of life and material gain and were content to skip along the surface of life enjoying the tangible rather than diving deeply into that which lies behind life.

The philosophy which occurs in their poetry is always filled with classical learning and classical mythology. This caused their verse to be too pedantic and too turgid. This sort of verse would appeal only to the learned and they exulted in the fact that their poetry was not for the contemptible unlearned multitude. In this they erred, for great poetry appeals to all classes. Since the appeal of their poetry was so limited, it cannot be said that the French developed a national poetry. If they had had more regard for the common people, they might have avoided too much pedantry and so have created a greater poetry.

But if the Pleiade writers lacked restraint and economy in their new-found freedom, if they depended too much on imitation and were too impatient to refine their ideas, if their

work was overfilled with classical learning and lacked deep feeling or poetic imagination; nevertheless, they achieved a poetry of beauty.

Spenser achieved the excellences of the Pleiade writers, and he fell into some of their defects, too. In his early training under Mulcaster and his university studies he became acquainted with the French writers who were so well known in England. He set for himself the like task of creating a greater English poetry which would rank with that of any country, ancient or modern. It is more than likely that he modeled his English Poet on Du Bellay's Deffense. At any rate, he seems to have followed the French program very closely. He, too, studied the classical writers. With their new French poetry as an example of the success with which the Pleiade had carried out its program, he could do no better than begin by translating Du Bellay. Having acquired a skill through these first exercises, he began to strike out for himself and adopted the classical forms of poetry which the French had recommended. Having begun with the sonnet, he used the form again in Tears of the Muses and in his Amoretti. Spenser used the eclogue in his Shepherd's Calendar, the elegy in the November eclogue, the satire in Mother Hubbard's Tale, the epigram, several of which follow the Amoretti, the hymn in his Four Hymns, the little floral lyrics in the Shepherd's Calendar and the epic in his Faerie Queene,

in which he followed closely the ideas of Ronsard and Du Bellay.

Spenser, too, had the same problem of style and language and from the French he took the idea that poetry should have an exalted style far above that of common speech. Spenser did monumental work in building up the language to suit the style. He adopted the very methods that the French had used, using provincial and archaic terms, words borrowed from foreign tongues and coined words. While Spenser went further than the French in borrowing, he always kept in mind the principle of decorum; his words were always suitable. Though he was criticized for borrowing many foreign words, he borrowed most from his own language. He always used discretion in the matter.

Just as Spenser had followed the Pleiade in building up a poetic style and language, he adopted many of their ideas about versification, on which style depends. Like Ronsard, he experimented with many different kinds of metre. Ronsard had recommended going back to old writers and Spenser did turn to Chaucer's eight-line stanza form. In the stanza forms for which he is noted, the Spenserian stanza and the Spenserian sonnet, Spenser showed originality and genius; while he borrowed from the French and from Chaucer, he went beyond that and created forms peculiarly his own.

The English poet showed as much genius in the treatment of his metres. In experimenting with the three metrical systems he developed a combination of them which best suited the pecu-

liarities of English. Each system aided him; the Latin system taught him word order and the importance of the phrase as the unit; the French taught him not only to work for stanza unity, or the relation of line to line, but he learned the rule of the ear and variation of accent while still keeping syllabic regularity. Like Ronsard, Spenser had a sense of music and he followed Ronsard's suggestions in creating a musical verse by attention torhythm and sound and word combinations.

Spenser achieved the French standards of beauty and perfection in verse, but his poetry is greater than the Pleiade poetry because of its underlying philosophy. It is true that Spenser, too, included in his poetry much philosophy which was not his own, but in his greatest work, his Faerie Queene, we find him to hold the doctrine of Christian Puritanism--the material wedded to the spiritual--the only permanent substance. He combined the Renaissance emphasis on this life with the Mediaeval stress on the next.

Spenser's poetic philosophy was much like that of the Pleiade. In brief, poetry and the poet were immortal and while poets could not hope for just recognition during their lifetime, in future ages their worth would come into its own. To those ideas Spenser added the idea that poetry should have a purpose and he gave his poetry both a political and a moral purpose.

Perhaps Spenser's conception of poetry was too high; like the Pleiade he had a contempt for the masses and his poetry is too learned and too full of classical allusion to appeal to the greater number of people. One reason for Shakespeare's popularity is the absence of this pedantry. Shakespeare wrote for the common people. While Spenser is just as important and perhaps through his work with English he made it possible for Shakespeare to write as he did, he cannot be appreciated generally becuase he is too complex. Truly he is a poet's poet. And not only is there difficulty with the classical learning but the true allegorical significance can only be seen after deep study into the political history of his time.

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